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EU project set to make chip cards more secure

John Walko
EE Times
10/21/2009 11:11 AM

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LONDON — Three of Europe's leading chip makers, Infineon Technologies AG, ST Microelectronics and NXP Semiconductors Germany GmbH, as well as its largest supplier of chip cards, Giesecke & Devrient GmbH and Gemalto, have joined forces with several other companies and research organizations to develop a high-security chip card platform.

They will participate in a Euros 13 million ($19.4 million) project dubbed BioP@ss whose aim is to do the technical spadework for the introduction of an electronic ID card in chip card format valid throughout the EU.

Other participants include id3Semiconductors, CEA-Leti, Precise Biometrics, Compuworx, oksystem, and Esterel Technologies.

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As well as an ID card, the device, technologies and systems under development will be capable of providing a secure means of authentication for services offered by governments and public authorities, with BioP@ss-holders able to identify themselves electronically and carry out biometric authentication on the Internet.

Infineon and NXP will collaborate on refining encryption technologies for chips. Another main focus is to enhance

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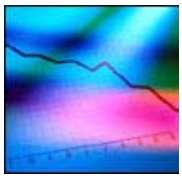

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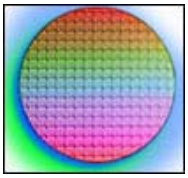

EU-funded project to support multicore system programming
A consortium of 9 industrial partners and research institutions has received a 4 million euro subsidy to conduct a three-year

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the data transfer rates between chip card and reader. G&D is developing an innovative chip card operating system which, by means of conventional Internet protocols (e.g. TCP/IP, HTTP, TLS and SOAP), will allow the chip cards to be used with Internet PCs without the need to install additional software components.

The connection between the chip card and the PC can either be wireless or via a USB interface.

It is estimated 380 million ID cards are currently in circulation throughout the EU's 27 countries. Several European nations — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the UK — have already announced their intention to introduce electronic ID cards over the next few years that will conform to international standards.

The project — scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2011 — aims to make chip card technology even more secure and easier to use for services such as a change of address, registering a vehicle, filing a tax return, casting a vote in elections and other services provided by the retail, banking and insurance sectors.

Half of the BioP@ss project costs will be covered by participating companies, with the remainder covered by funds from the European Eureka clusters Catrene/MEDEA+, which are provided by the national governments.

More detailed information about the project can be downloaded here.

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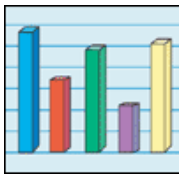
research project aiming to simplify parallel programming by developing integrated Transactional Memory systems for multicore computers.

WSTS cuts chip forecast by half



The World Semiconductor Trade Statistics (WSTS) group has cut its IC forecast.